



# THE VOICE REPORT

The Latest News from "The Voice of Lightning" 125<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion, Bagram Air Field  
Sunday, May 30, 2004

## **Commander's Corner**

**LTC Bevan R. Daley**

This month, I would like to yield the Commander's Corner to SGT Herndon, who works in our CJ6 section at Bagram. He's written a poem that expresses the feelings that all of us have for our loved ones back home.

### **I Know My Daddy Loves Me**

I know my Daddy loves me  
Each and every day,  
I know my Daddy loves me  
Even though he's far away.  
He calls me on the telephone,  
I tell him that I'm sad  
He can't be here to play with me  
Like other children's dads.  
I want him to be here with me  
In laughter and in tears,  
I want him here to give me hugs  
And chase away my fears.  
He tells me that he misses me  
But he has a job to do,  
He knows how much I need him  
But other children need him too.  
The kids there cannot go to school  
And don't have much to eat,  
No warm beds to snuggle in  
Or shoes upon their feet.  
My Daddy is there to help them  
So they won't be so sad,  
He's going to make it better,  
And knowing makes me glad.  
He tells me that he thinks of me  
Each moment of every day,  
He always keeps my picture with him  
And in his prayers I stay.  
And soon before I know it  
He'll be home with Mom and Me,  
We'll be united once again,  
A stronger family.  
But 'till that day has come at last  
I'll do all I can do  
To help my Mommy all I can;  
She misses Daddy too.  
And when I lie in bed at night,  
I'll say a little prayer  
I know my Daddy loves me,  
No matter when, No matter where.



## **25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Light Takes Command in Afghanistan**

When the 125<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion landed at Bagram Air Field over a month ago, we were one of the first units from Schofield Barracks in Afghanistan. At that time, we fell under the command of 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division of Ft. Drum. However on April 15<sup>th</sup>, Afghanistan officially became Tropic Lightning country with a transfer of authority from Major General Austin to our Major General Olson.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, Task Force Warrior took control of Afghanistan on May 27, 2003 with 13,000 Soldiers. They had a very productive deployment, "effectively reduced the enemy's drastic acts of terrorism with a minimal loss of coalition and American Soldiers' lives," according to Gen. Austin. The work that 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain completed over the past 11 months has "allowed the U.S. to place the future of Afghanistan in the hands of the Afghan people," Gen Austin continued.

Major General Olson spoke about the Division's reason for coming to foreign soil and the job that sits ahead of the 25<sup>th</sup> ID(L) over the next year in Afghanistan. "Let us not forget what brings us to this place, the events of 9/11." During this deployment, the Tropic Lightning Division plans to "make extensive efforts to improve the plight of the Afghan people," said Gen. Olson. With "each passing week the momentum of progress continues" in Afghanistan, said Gen. Olson.

The 125<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion is continuing to make significant progress in OEF. With the full arrival of Task Force Alpha, we are now solely responsible for communications across Afghanistan. We are all excited to be taking on this important role in what is now another piece of Tropic Lightning country.

Written by 1LT Cursha Pierce-Lunderman

Photography by Soldiers of 125<sup>th</sup> Sig BN

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY PROMOTED SOLDIERS!!**

On 1 May, the Battalion promoted 5 well deserving Soldiers in hopes of their continued leadership and quest for excellence. One of FES 65's operators, SPC Thompson was promoted after less than two years in service. He says he progressed so quickly because "good NCOs have supported (him) and helped out along the way." SPC Thompson plans to use the deployment to take eArmyU classes and hopefully get promoted to SGT before returning to Hawaii.



Newly promoted SPC Campos (Left) and PFC Brown (Right) at their promotion ceremony at the Joint Operations Center.

Also, CPT Adigun was promoted on 1 May. CPT Adigun is a new addition to our Battalion and to the Signal Corps. He said the transition from leading a tank platoon to learning signal basics has been, "a difficult, ongoing learning process." He still hasn't adjusted to being called a Captain, but he definitely welcomes the pay raise, along with the other newly promoted Soldiers. Congratulations to everyone promoted in the month of May, we know you have many more great accomplishments in your future.

### **PROMOTIONS EFFECTIVE 1 MAY 2004**

**1LT to CPT Adigun**

**PFC to SPC Campos**

**PFC to SPC Thompson**

**PV2 to PFC Brown**

**PV2 to PFC Springfield**



A smiling PFC Springfield (Right) and a stone-faced SPC Thompson (Left) stand in front of the company just after their promotions.



Our brand new CPT Adigun is overjoyed to finally receive his long awaited rank.

## **NCO of the Month and Soldier of the Month**



SGT Dean pictured with Afghan girls during a humanitarian mission she volunteered for in April. Soldiers from the Battalion delivered food, clothes and school supplies to children in a village outside of Kabul. "One of the best experiences of my life," said SGT Dean.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> the Battalion held an NCO of the Month and Soldier of the Month board to acknowledge the best and brightest Soldiers in the battalion. SGT Dean won the NCO of the Month board. She believed that "taking advantage of spare time to study" helped her the most in preparation for the board. PFC Ferony won the Soldier of the Month and said that "knowing current events well" gave him an advantage in the board. The battalion plans to hold the next board on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Until then, Soldiers are anxiously preparing for their opportunity to win the distinction.



Soldier of the Month, PFC Ferony hard at work in his FES

## LONGHORN NEWS

Over the past two weeks, all of Task Force Alpha has safely arrived in Kandahar, Afghanistan. We are settling in and making the built-up airfield our new home. Soldiers working with Node Center 60 have all the amenities of home, complete with an air-conditioned office, training area, and Armed Forces Network (AFN) television. Soldiers on FES 64 are preparing to move to a Forward Operations Base (FOB), called Khowst. Soldiers on SEN teams G13, G71, and G52, are settling into their FOB homes for the year as well.

Recently promoted SGT Stephen Johnson, from Node Center 60 describes Kandahar in this light. "This home away from home is hot, windy, and dusty, but the Soldiers have a cornucopia of activities. In this tent-city, we have a 24-hour gym complete with an indoor rock-climbing wall. We also have a 24-hour morale, welfare and recreation tent that has Internet access and DSN phones. It also has a movie room with couches and a popcorn machine."



**PFC Javier Cazarezmartinez (front) at the M16 firing range with a watchful 1LT James Howell (rear right) standing near by.**

"The Boardwalk is a wooden walkway that has five little shops around it, to include the world renowned Green Been Coffee House where Soldiers can get their half-caf, double non-fat, soy latte for a small price, of course. The boardwalk will also play host to a rock concert later this week, headlining the never before heard of band, Brickfoot. If the boardwalk or the gym does not meet a Soldier's need to unwind after a long days work in the sun, they usually retire to their air-conditioned tent. Most have brought books or video games to spend on their off duty time."

Longhorn Soldiers have definitely been busy these past few weeks. In addition to assuming control of the tactical network, they have been honing their Soldier skills by participating in a zero range, and practicing how to react in the event of a rocket attack.

"All of us Soldiers are as happy as we can be in our little desert home," SGT Johnson adds. "As for all of you back home, keep us in your hearts and prayers and we will be home before you know it."

## A Trip Through Afghanistan

**By SGT Martinez**

When I was first told that I had to go on a convoy from Bagram to the city of Kabul many visions of what I thought Afghanistan should look like flashed through my head: total lawlessness, people running around stealing and killing. What I observed couldn't have been further from the picture that I painted in my mind.

Many of the locals just outside the Bagram gate carried AK-47's, but for some reason I never really felt threatened by their presence. It seemed that every local store proudly displayed Coca-Cola in the one-liter bottle, shows how far-reaching American culture is in even this part of the world. The local mode of transportation ranges from walking, wheelchairs, biking and the ever-popular how many people can we fit into this Toyota Corolla taxi. The houses are made from a type of mud brick that comes in various shades of brown tint.

Once we left Bagram the country side seemed to spread out before us, huge mountains, some snowcapped some not, large plains that seemed to have green and brown patches of vegetation that grew out of the dusty arid land. Off in the distance there were large ancient structures reminiscent of the movie Hidalgo. Leading to these places were paths outlined with stones colored red on the out sides of the paths and white towards the insides marking the ever present mine field. The children seemed to love seeing our trucks come up the road. They ran so quickly, I wondered how bad they'd embarrass me on my 2 mile run. Greetings from the children lightened my heart, smiling faces, waving hands, and the universal thumbs-up.

The best way to describe Kabul has to be basically New York City of Afghanistan. The rush of the traffic had to be one of the most exhilarating experiences I've had in Afghanistan. Thousands of people everywhere coming and going. A real culture shock where the groups of small children from ages 2-4 running in packs with no adult supervision. Driving in Kabul is an absolute free for all, no traffic lights, no street signs, and no right of way rules, however I only saw one traffic accident that appeared relatively minor. Definitely a whole new world. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to view a different culture even if only through a car window.



**A two-story storefront just outside of Kabul. You can see the bicycle parking to the left of the light pole, a common form of transportation.**

**My Near Miss at Khowst****By SGT Lytle**

It all started with a nice day of eating at Viper Mess Hall with LTC Daley. We were heading to Khowst to have a look at where the Brigade was going to place its headquarters. Walking down steel beach, the nickname for the helicopter landing strip, we find the helicopter taking us to Khowst. All I can see is nothing but officers. The first thing running through my mind is that LTC Daley brought me to serve coffee and drinks on the flight. I just happened to be the only enlisted on the flight, other than the flight crew. Col. Hatch, the Brigade Commander, hops into the hot seat. It's a seat between the pilot and co-pilot up front. Col. Hatch starts talking about how he was on this same aircraft when he was a LT some years ago. Great, now I'm sure this thing will never make it there. We wind our way through the mountains for about an hour with our Apache helicopter escort, until we pop out in to this wide flat valley with a river through it. Our deadly escort bolts forward to clear the path for us. After landing we head out the back of the helicopter and I get my first look at Khowst, where is it? We start following everyone off the landing strip to a small tree line. We have found the small FOB Khowst, nicely tucked away under a small clump of trees. I didn't have to look hard for the satellite team; they were right in front of the only hard building in Khowst. Not a bad little place, just tiny.



**COL Hatch (left) and SGT Lytle (right) next to the Chinook after their landing in Khowst.**

After our two hours of talking and briefs it was time to head back to Bagram. We boarded the helicopter, when they tried to fire up the engines, the whole system shut off, not a good sign. The Marines bring an aircraft generator to get the Chinook started up. Once they get the engines started up we head out back through the mountains. About half way back we started to run into a storm. It was dropping snow on the mountains that were we passing over a ridge, the pilot had the Chinook climbing and banking to the left when a sudden gust of wind came across the propellers and made it hard for us to continue in our original direction. Our stomachs ran into our necks, and with the ground rushing up to meet us, the pilot pushes the Chinook to the right and recovers. It was just in time because it seemed we just had barely enough room for me to stand on the ground and touch the aircraft, that's a good six feet.

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(Khowst Continued)

I didn't remember anyone telling me that we were going for a rollercoaster ride! We spent the rest of the ride grabbing cargo nets every time the aircraft even made the slightest move. I spent the last 30 minutes wondering if I needed to use my Kevlar helmet to collect my stomach contents. Next time, I'll wait for space on the airplane!

**A Tribute to Mothers**

Deployments are hard on all families, regardless of how many a Soldier goes through, it's always terrible to miss loved ones. Many of you reading this newsletter are mothers missing your Soldiers deployed, others are mothers raising kids alone while your Soldier is deployed. However, we have a handful of mothers here that are missing their children back home more and more each day. We took a few minutes to speak with them this Mother's Day.

SGT Davis has a 3-year-old son, Courtney, back home who's living with his father for the next year. "One of my biggest worries is that he won't remember me when I get back or he'll be upset with me for leaving him for so long." Even with the distance, SGT Davis still tries her best to make sure Courtney knows his mother truly loves him. "I try to control things from here, I make sure he brushes his teeth, I talk to his baby-sitter," she continued. SPC Cullars also left a 4-year-old son at home and has the same fears as SGT Davis. She gains comfort in "seeing pictures of her son and just trying to laugh as much as possible." SPC Guynes has a 16-month-old son awaiting her return back in Hawaii. Her "faith in God and the comfort that (her) life is in His hands," allows her to know that she and her son will make it through the deployment just fine.

The deployment has been stressful on all the mothers here, but they feel that their motherhood allows them to be better Soldiers. "I feel like I have a better understanding of responsibility and how to take care of someone, so it's easy for me to do the same for my Soldiers," said SGT Davis. "By being a Soldier, my duties as a mother suffer, though, from missing so much of him, it's a hard sacrifice," said SPC Guynes. "I just encourage everyone at home to send us letters, pictures, and things from home. It really increases the morale of the Soldiers, we miss everyone," said SPC Guynes.



**SPC Cullars (left) and SGT Davis (right) at the Node Center/FES site at Bagram Air Field.**

# Postcard from Bagram

From: SSG Elmer Perez



Age: 25, Section Sgt, C Co, Node Center 61

To my soulmate and beautiful wife, Michelle and my two lovely children, Aryanna and Giovanni. I love you and miss you all more than you can imagine. Also to my parents, Fluvia and Adalberto in Chicago, IL. You are in my thoughts and prayers everyday. Being here in Bagram, has made me appreciate the little things we take for granted as Americans. However, I'm safe & can't wait to get home so we can enjoy spending the rest of our lives together.

## 125<sup>th</sup> Signal Picture Gallery



**Happy Asian-Pacific Islander Month!** Pictured from left to right: CPT Voss, SGT Atalig, 1LT Tavares, SGT Lee, SGT San Nicolas SPC Khounsavath (front)



SGT Herndon hard at work during a recent trip to Kabul.



The CJ6 Family just before the move to the new Joint Operations Center. Pictured from left to right: (Back row) CPT Narvaes, CPT Hartsock, SFC McClure, SSG Meza, CPT Poirier, CPT Adams, SFC Skinner, MAJ Wardle, CPT Bager SGM Stewart. (Front Row) CPT Hartsock, PFC Hottle, SGT Rivera, SGM Benyard, CPT Adigun, LTC Daley, CSM Williams, SFC Kent, SFC Spann, MAJ Weiland

### Task Force Charlie BBQ



**U.S. vs. Korea:** HQ Platoon plays a friendly game of volleyball against Republic of Korea Soldiers at Company BBQ



**A spectator sport:** (Left to right) SGT Smith, SFC Vasquez, and PFC Reyes take front row seats at the volleyball game



**More than a game:** CPT Phillips (left) stands on the lookout while LTC Daley (right) is poised for the kill in the Officer vs. Enlisted game. The Enlisted won, but the Officers are promising payback.



**A hot dog and some bunny ears:** While SGT Rivera (right) attempts to enjoy his hot dog, SFC Eich (left) is hard at work with his favorite pastime, harassing his Soldiers



**The Polish American Range:** Task Force Charlie Soldiers and Polish Special Forces spent the day at the firing range on 30 April perfecting their weapons skills and firing new weapons the Polish Soldiers brought along with them.